WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A composition suitable for treatment of the dermis comprising a dermatologically acceptable carrier and an effective amount of a cyclic peptide having an amino acid sequence of formula I:

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{Xaa}_3\text{-Xaa}_4\text{-Xaa}_5\text{-Xaa}_6\text{-Xaa}_7 \\ \text{Xaa}_{11}\text{-Xaa}_{10}\text{-Xaa}_9\text{-Xaa}_8 \end{array}\right] \qquad \textbf{I}$$

wherein:

each Xaa_3 and Xaa_{11} is separately a cysteine-like amino acid;

each Xaa_4 and Xaa_6 is separately a polar amino acid;

Xaa_5 is a basic amino acid;

each Xaa_7 and Xaa_{10} is separately an aliphatic or a neutral polar amino acid; and

each Xaa_8 and Xaa_9 is separately a nonpolar amino acid.

2. A composition suitable for treatment of the dermis comprising a dermatologically acceptable carrier and an effective amount of a cyclic peptide having an amino acid sequence of formula II:

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{Xaa}_1\text{ - Xaa}_2\text{-Xaa}_3\text{-Xaa}_4\text{-Xaa}_5\text{-Xaa}_6\text{-Xaa}_7 \\ \text{Xaa}_{14}\text{-Xaa}_{13}\text{-Xaa}_{12}\text{-Xaa}_{11}\text{-Xaa}_{10}\text{-Xaa}_9\text{-Xaa}_8 \end{array}\right] \qquad \textbf{II}$$

wherein:

each Xaa_1, Xaa_8, Xaa_9 and Xaa_{13} is separately a nonpolar amino acid;

each Xaa_2 and Xaa_5 is separately a basic amino acid;

each Xaa_3 and Xaa_{11} is separately a cysteine-like amino acid;

each Xaa_4 and Xaa_6 is separately a polar amino acid;

each Xaa_7 and Xaa_{10} is separately an aliphatic or a neutral polar amino acid;

Xaa_{12} is an aromatic amino acid; and

Xaa_{14} is an acidic amino acid.

3. A composition suitable for treatment of the dermis comprising a dermatologically acceptable carrier and an effective amount of a cyclic peptide having an amino acid sequence of formula III:

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \text{Xaa}_7\text{-Xaa}_8\text{-Xaa}_9\text{-Xaa}_{10}\text{-Xaa}_{11}\text{-Xaa}_{12}\text{-Xaa}_{13} \\ \text{Xaa}_{20}\text{-Xaa}_{19}\text{-Xaa}_{18}\text{-Xaa}_{17}\text{-Xaa}_{16}\text{-Xaa}_{15}\text{-Xaa}_{14} \end{array}\right] \qquad \text{III}$$

wherein:

each Xaa_7 and Xaa_{10} is separately an aliphatic or a neutral polar amino acid;
each Xaa_8, Xaa_9, Xaa_{13} and Xaa_{15} is separately a nonpolar amino acid;
each Xaa_{11} and Xaa_{17} is separately a cysteine-like amino acid;
Xaa_{12} is an aromatic amino acid;
Xaa_{14} is an acidic amino acid;
each Xaa_{16} and Xaa_{19} is separately a basic amino acid; and
Xaa_{18} is a polar amino acid.

4. The composition of any one of claims 2 or 3, wherein Xaa_{12} is phenylalanine or tryptophan.

5. The composition of any one of claims 1 or 2, wherein Xaa_3 and Xaa_{11} are cysteine.

6. The composition of any one of claims 1 or 2, wherein and Xaa_5 is lysine.

7. The composition of any one of claims 1-3, wherein the composition comprises a mixture of the cyclic peptides.

8. The composition of any one of claims 1-3, wherein the cyclic peptide is recognized and bound by a serine proteases but is not cleaved by the serine protease.

9. The composition of any one of claims 1-3, wherein the cyclic peptide can inhibit serine protease activity.

10. The composition of any one of claims 1-3, wherein the cyclic peptide can inhibit protease activity by trypsin, β-trypsin, chymotrypsin, cathepsin G, aminopeptidase, elastase, matripase, or thrombin.

11. The composition of any one of claims 1-3, wherein the composition is delivered from an absorbent article.

12. A composition comprising a dermatologically acceptable carrier and a cyclic peptide that comprises SEQ ID NO:1 (CTKSIPPIC), SEQ ID NO:2 (GRCTKSIPPICFPD), SEQ ID NO:3 (IPPICFPDGRCTK) or a combination thereof.

13. A method for treating or preventing a skin irritation on a mammal comprising administering to the mammal an effective amount of a cyclic peptide having an amino acid sequence of formula I:

$$\left[\begin{array}{c} Xaa_3\text{-}Xaa_4\text{-}Xaa_5\text{-}Xaa_6\text{-}Xaa_7 \\ Xaa_{11}\text{-}Xaa_{10}\text{-}Xaa_9\text{-}Xaa_8 \end{array}\right] \qquad \mathbf{I}$$

wherein:

each Xaa_3 and Xaa_{11} is separately a cysteine-like amino acid;
each Xaa_4 and Xaa_6 is separately a polar amino acid;
Xaa_5 is a basic amino acid;
each Xaa_7 and Xaa_{10} is separately an aliphatic or a neutral polar amino acid; and
each Xaa_8 and Xaa_9 is separately a nonpolar amino acid.

14. A method for treating or preventing a skin irritation on a mammal comprising administering to the mammal an effective amount of a cyclic peptide having an amino acid sequence of formula II:

$$\left[\begin{array}{c} Xaa_1\text{-}Xaa_2\text{-}Xaa_3\text{-}Xaa_4\text{-}Xaa_5\text{-}Xaa_6\text{-}Xaa_7 \\ Xaa_{14}\text{-}Xaa_{13}\text{-}Xaa_{12}\text{-}Xaa_{11}\text{-}Xaa_{10}\text{-}Xaa_9\text{-}Xaa_8 \end{array}\right] \qquad \mathbf{II}$$

wherein:

each Xaa$_1$, Xaa$_8$, Xaa$_9$ and Xaa$_{13}$ is separately a nonpolar amino acid;
each Xaa$_2$ and Xaa$_5$ is separately a basic amino acid;
each Xaa$_3$ and Xaa$_{11}$ is separately a cysteine-like amino acid;
each Xaa$_4$ and Xaa$_6$ is separately a polar amino acid;
each Xaa$_7$ and Xaa$_{10}$ is separately an aliphatic or a neutral polar amino acid;
Xaa$_{12}$ is an aromatic amino acid; and
Xaa$_{14}$ is an acidic amino acid.

15. A method for treating or preventing a skin irritation on a mammal comprising administering to the mammal an effective amount of a cyclic peptide having an amino acid sequence of formula III:

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \mathrm{Xaa}_7\text{-}\mathrm{Xaa}_8\text{-}\mathrm{Xaa}_9\text{-}\mathrm{Xaa}_{10}\text{-}\mathrm{Xaa}_{11}\text{-}\mathrm{Xaa}_{12}\text{-}\mathrm{Xaa}_{13} \\ \mathrm{Xaa}_{20}\text{-}\mathrm{Xaa}_{19}\text{-}\mathrm{Xaa}_{18}\text{-}\mathrm{Xaa}_{17}\text{-}\mathrm{Xaa}_{16}\text{-}\mathrm{Xaa}_{15}\text{-}\mathrm{Xaa}_{14} \end{array}\right] \qquad \mathbf{III}$$

wherein:

each Xaa$_7$ and Xaa$_{10}$ is separately an aliphatic or a neutral polar amino acid;
each Xaa$_8$, Xaa$_9$, Xaa$_{13}$ and Xaa$_{15}$ is separately a nonpolar amino acid;
each Xaa$_{11}$ and Xaa$_{17}$ is separately a cysteine-like amino acid;
Xaa$_{12}$ is an aromatic amino acid;
Xaa$_{14}$ is an acidic amino acid;
each Xaa$_{16}$ and Xaa$_{19}$ is separately a basic amino acid; and
Xaa$_{18}$ is a polar amino acid.

16. The method of any one of claims 14 or 15, wherein Xaa$_{12}$ is phenylalanine or tryptophan.

17. The method of any one of claims 13 or 14, wherein Xaa$_3$ and Xaa$_{11}$ are cysteine.

18. The method of any one of claims 13 or 14, wherein and Xaa$_5$ is lysine.

19. The method of any one of claims 13-15, wherein the peptide is a mixture of cyclic peptides.

20. The method of any one of claims 13-15, wherein the skin irritation is primarily caused by proteolytic enzymes that are present in human feces, menstrual fluids, nasal fluids, colostomy fluids, dandruff, or healing wounds.

21. The method of any one of claims 13-15, wherein the cyclic peptide is recognized and bound by a serine protease but is not cleaved by the serine protease.

22. The method of any one of claims 13-15, wherein the cyclic peptide can inhibit serine protease activity.

23. The method of any one of claims 13-15, wherein the cyclic peptide can inhibit protease activity by trypsin, *β*-trypsin, chymotrypsin, cathepsin G, aminopeptidase, elastase, matripase, or thrombin.

24. The method of any one of claims 13-15, wherein the cyclic peptide is administered from an absorbent article.

25. A method for treating or preventing a skin irritation on a mammal comprising administering to the mammal an effective amount of a cyclic peptide that comprises SEQ ID NO:1 (CTKSIPPIC), SEQ ID NO:2 (GRCTKSIPPICFPD) or SEQ ID NO:3 (IPPICFPDGRCTK).

26. An absorbent article that comprises a composition comprising a dermatologically acceptable carrier and an effective amount of a cyclic peptide having an amino acid sequence of formula I:

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} Xaa_3\text{-}Xaa_4\text{-}Xaa_5\text{-}Xaa_6\text{-}Xaa_7 \\ Xaa_{11}\text{-}Xaa_{10}\text{-}Xaa_9\text{-}Xaa_8 \end{array}\right] \qquad \mathrm{I}$$

wherein:

each Xaa_3 and Xaa_{11} is separately a cysteine-like amino acid;

each Xaa_4 and Xaa_6 is separately a polar amino acid;

Xaa_5 is a basic amino acid;

each Xaa_7 and Xaa_{10} is separately an aliphatic or a neutral polar amino acid; and each Xaa_8 and Xaa_9 is separately a nonpolar amino acid.

27. An absorbent article that comprises a composition comprising a dermatologically acceptable carrier and an effective amount of a cyclic peptide having an amino acid sequence of formula II:

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} Xaa_1 - Xaa_2 - Xaa_3 - Xaa_4 - Xaa_5 - Xaa_6 - Xaa_7 \\ Xaa_{14} - Xaa_{13} - Xaa_{12} - Xaa_{11} - Xaa_{10} - Xaa_9 - Xaa_8 \end{array}\right] \qquad \textbf{II}$$

wherein:

each Xaa_1, Xaa_8, Xaa_9 and Xaa_{13} is separately a nonpolar amino acid;
each Xaa_2 and Xaa_5 is separately a basic amino acid;
each Xaa_3 and Xaa_{11} is separately a cysteine-like amino acid;
each Xaa_4 and Xaa_6 is separately a polar amino acid;
each Xaa_7 and Xaa_{10} is separately an aliphatic or a neutral polar amino acid;
Xaa_{12} is an aromatic amino acid; and
Xaa_{14} is an acidic amino acid.

28. An absorbent article that comprises a composition comprising a dermatologically acceptable carrier and an effective amount of a cyclic peptide having an amino acid sequence of formula III:

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} Xaa_7 - Xaa_8 - Xaa_9 - Xaa_{10} - Xaa_{11} - Xaa_{12} - Xaa_{13} \\ Xaa_{20} - Xaa_{19} - Xaa_{18} - Xaa_{17} - Xaa_{16} - Xaa_{15} - Xaa_{14} \end{array}\right] \qquad \textbf{III}$$

wherein:

each Xaa_7 and Xaa_{10} is separately an aliphatic or a neutral polar amino acid;
each Xaa_8, Xaa_9 , Xaa_{13} and Xaa_{15} is separately a nonpolar amino acid;
each Xaa_{11} and Xaa_{17} is separately a cysteine-like amino acid;
Xaa_{12} is an aromatic amino acid;
Xaa_{14} is an acidic amino acid;
each Xaa_{16} and Xaa_{19} is separately a basic amino acid; and
Xaa_{18} is a polar amino acid.

29. The absorbent article of any one of claims 27 or 28, wherein Xaa_{12} is phenylalanine or tryptophan.

30. The absorbent article of any one of claims 26 or 27, wherein Xaa_3 and Xaa_{11} are cysteine.

31. The absorbent article of any one of claims 26 or 27, wherein and Xaa_5 is lysine.

32. The absorbent article of any one of claims 26-28, wherein the composition comprises a mixture of the cyclic peptides.

33. The absorbent article of any one of claims 26-28, wherein the skin irritation is primarily caused by proteolytic enzymes that are present in human feces, menstrual fluids, nasal fluids, colostomy fluids, dandruff, or healing wounds.

34. The absorbent article of any one of claims 26-28, wherein the cyclic peptide is recognized and bound by a serine protease but is not cleaved by the serine protease.

35. The absorbent article of any one of claims 26-28, wherein the cyclic peptide can inhibit serine protease activity.

36. The absorbent article of any one of claims 26-28, wherein the cyclic peptide can inhibit protease activity by trypsin, β-trypsin, chymotrypsin, cathepsin G, aminopeptidase, elastase, matripase, or thrombin.

37. The absorbent article of any one of claims 26-28, wherein the absorbent article is a feminine hygiene garment, a sanitary napkin, a panty liner, a tampon, a diaper, an incontinence brief, or a pair of training pants.

38. An absorbent article that comprises a composition comprising a dermatologically acceptable carrier and an effective amount of a cyclic peptide that comprises SEQ ID NO:1 (CTKSIPPIC), SEQ ID NO:2 (GRCTKSIPPICFPD) or SEQ ID NO:3 (IPPICFPDGRCTK).